

Community Services

Budget Message

FY 2001/02 and 2002/03

Promoting teamwork throughout the department in partnership with state and local health, social service, and criminal justice agencies is an essential focus of the **Community Services Department**. The Department ensures high quality customer service through community based programs that offer both information and direct client assistance.

The Seminole County **Probation Division** consists of adult misdemeanor probation, pretrial diversion, and post booking pretrial release (mental health). Through increased supervision and analysis of an offender's environment we focus on affecting positive behavior for the purpose of reducing crime and recidivism. This objective is supported by a court-ordered increase in cost of supervision revenue of 25%, from \$40/month to \$50/month per probationer, and in the reorganization of officers into teams covering specific geographic areas. The teams use Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping, increase random drug testing of offenders, and improve communication links with other criminal justice professionals through the use of cellular phones, wireless laptop computers and video conferencing.

Prosecution Alternatives for Youth (PAY) provides pretrial services by involving the community in juvenile justice. Over 300 adult and youth volunteers assist staff in promoting positive behavior, and holding young offenders accountable for their actions. PAY is taking a proactive approach to case supervision by conducting frequent home and field visits. This initiative will be augmented in FY 2002 by the use of wireless laptop computers linked to a tracking system shared by all county law enforcement agencies, an effort that will provide "real time" offender information to all supervising / monitoring entities. PAY processed over 1,000 cases in its arbitration and Teen Court programs in FY 2000 with less than a 12% recidivism rate and a savings of over \$800,000 in court costs for FY2000. Beginning October 2, 2001, a \$50 one-time diversion fee will be assessed to each PAY client. Based on current referral rates, this charge is projected to generate approximately \$40,000 in revenue to offset contractual services costs associated with counseling and classes for these clients.

The **Veteran Services Office** is increasing its outreach and publicizing efforts to support public awareness of the ever broadening VA benefits in addition to providing support to the newly opened Sanford VA Community Based Out-Patient Clinic. Through staff education and training, Veterans Services strives to secure the maximum VA benefits for all eligible Seminole County citizens.

The **Division of Community Assistance** provides temporary emergency services to citizens to meet their basic health and social needs when there are no other resources available to them. By being "a hand up" during a time of crisis to approximately 2000 clients annually, we prevent greater financial distress, promote a sense of hope by restoring individual self-sufficiency, and strengthen the overall quality of life for the entire community. These positive outcomes are the result of coordinating access to resources through direct services provided by our staff, or through referral to other community agencies more suitable to the needs of the client. Current initiatives include a more formal monitoring process for the funds provided to local non-profit agencies, and the implementation of a social services intern program to ensure efficient utilization of all resources and effective delivery of services.

The **Seminole County Health Department** provides services to promote and protect the health and safety of our community. Services offered include childhood immunizations, flu and pneumonia shots, pediatric, dental, WIC and prenatal care for low-income residents, school physicals, prevention, screening and treatment for TB, STD, and HIV/AIDS, birth and death certificates, epidemiology, tobacco prevention, environmental health inspections and permitting, foreign travel shots, and the Healthy Start program. A second dental clinic will be established in Casselberry in October 2001 to complement the growth in dental services provided at the Sanford site.